

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, November 13, 1911, with transcript

duplic Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. 1331
Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D.C. (November 13, 1911.) My dear Alec:

It took so long to work over a letter to Mr. Blanchard last night that I did not get down to my letter to you. But breakfast is not ready yet so you won't suffer. I am so much interested in opening that Public Library and reading room, I can not bear to give it up and I can not see that any serious practical objection has so far been offered. I can not find that Miss McCurdy has ever been consulted any more than she was concerning the club program, or you either. If the library were Mr. Kennan's private property nothing more could be said, but it is not, it belongs to the people of Baddeck of which you and I and Miss McCurdy are part, and we have a right to say something about it. Besides as far as gifts to the library go we have contributed far more and it makes me mad to have them locked up and to be told that I must wait until I am old before I can hope to see it appreciated. This may in the end be true and when one is busily at work on things old age is apt to come before one is aware of it, but by sitting down and waiting for it to come the process is apt to seem a very long and dreary one.

Miss McCurdy said she thought fifty dollars would secure a good librarian and that the rest might be left to her. Mr. Kennan says that the expenses of running the library would be half as much again, but he gives no figures in support of his assertion. He 2 mentions magazines, lights, fuels and services of a janitor as the other expenses. Now magazines can be obtained gratis. If it takes 2 pounds of coal to heat this house for four months, 2 pounds at most ought to heat Gertrude Hall for seven, particularly if I have part of it partitioned off with stout canvas. C.B. coal used to cost \$3.00 a ton — \$6.00 for fuel, say half as much more for light — \$9.00. As for a janitor I don't see the need of one. If the

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people are so unappreciative of books as Mr. Kennan and Mr. Blanchard claim they won't try burglarizing them and a fire insurance wouldn't be very expensive and is a necessary expense anyway. The only need of a janitor would be to carry coal from the cellar once a day. I should expect the librarian to sweep out the room and keep up the fire, so the janitor ought not to cost more than 25¢ a week, seven months — twenty-eight weeks \$8.00 fuel & lights 9.00 \$17.00

Total expense of running library for seven months \$17.00 at most. The amount we took in at Mr. Ellsworth's library lecture would have covered this and left three dollars to the good and I had supposed that this money would be applied to this purpose after paying all debts. They were I think \$10.00 which would have left ten dollars to be applied to the library maintenance and seven more to be raised. There need be no difficulty in raising seven dollars by means of entertainments. Altogether I cannot see why there is any practical objection to trying my plan. The library meantime can grow by obtaining from the government it's publications which will be of great value to a portion of the public we cannot easily cater to otherwise — the farmers and merchants.

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Well my dear I have filled my letter with what I want to say to Mr. Blanchard, but this is my only means of talking it over with you.

And it is half past eight now so I must go. No letters from you for two days. I miss them so much.

Dr. Evans came up to see me yesterday and gave me something that relieved the pain in my face, so I was able to think of something else. There's nothing takes down my pride more than my inability to stand up against a little suffering. It's all gone now.

Elsie's party is Dec. 9th, don't forget.

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Ever your loving Mabel. November 13th, 1911.